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THE

SEMI-HALF-YEARLY

Circular

OF THE

PRESIDENT OF THE LONDON CONFERENCE

OF THE

CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST

OF

LATTER-DAY SAINTS,

TO THE

PRESIDENTS OF BRANCHES

AND

PRIESTHOOD GENERALLY.

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THE

SEMI-HALF-YEARLY CIRCULAR

OF THE

PRESIDENT OF THE LONDON CONFERENCE OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS,

TO THE PRESIDENTS OF BRANCHES AND PRIESTHOOD GENERALLY,

GREETING.

Dear Brethren,

You are hereby notified that our half-yearly conference will be held in London, Saturday, the 31st day of May, and Sunday, the 1st day of June, next.

The Presidents of branches and travelling Elders are requested to meet in the Eastern Lecture Hall, Church Lane, Whitechapel, on Saturday, the 31st of May, at one o'clock, p.m., to commence the transaction of Conference business. As we expect to be favoured with a visit from four of the quorum of the Twelve Apostles, the two Counsellors to President Richards, and thirty or forty Presidents of Conferences, &c., none of the Priesthood of this Conference will be expected to attend except the Presidents of Branches and travelling Elders, so that the room may not be over crowded, and the business of the meeting thus retarded. The Presidents of the Country Branches and all the travelling Elders are requested to be present at the time specified, so that they may get through with giving in their reports by the time the Presidents of the London Branches will assemble in the evening. There is but one Hall in London sufficiently large to hold our Conference in, and that one (viz., "Exeter Hall") cannot be had. It will, therefore, be necessary to divide the Sabbath afternoon and evening meetings, so as to occupy eight or nine of the largest Halls and Chapels used by the principal branches of the Church in London. To prepare for this, it will be necessary to transact all Conference business on saturday afternoon and evening, and give those instructions that may be deemed necessary for the edification of the Presidents of Branches and Priesthood generally. The Sabbath forenoon meeting will be held in the "City of London Literary and Scientific Institution," Aldersgate Street, City, at 10 o'clock.

The time will be occupied in passing the usual resolutions, and giving instructions to the Priesthood. At the close of this meeting, the Conference will be adjourned, and the grand array of talent that will then be

present will be so disposed of as to render the attraction equal in all the Halls and Chapels hereafter designated; therefore the Saints, and all enquirers after Truth, will be under no necessity of wandering over the City in search of the greater light.

For the comfort of all concerned, I will here state that, during the holding of the Council Saturday afternoon and evening, refreshments will be provided, so that the physical man may be refreshed and strengthened from time to time without leaving the hall.

The Presidents of Branches are hereby informed that the information called for in the first paragraph of the Note appended to the Conference Report for December 2nd, last, will be dispensed with, as it is found that it will be necessary to go to the expense of getting a new Conference Record Book before the information can be made available, but their attention to the second and third paragraphs is requested.

It will be seen, by reference to President Orson Pratt's General Epistle, published in Star No. 16, vol. 12, that the Presidents of Conferences are directed to take measures to ascertain the number of mechanics in their several Conferences, and the amount of means possessed by each towards his own emigration. In obedience to this council, I request the Presidents of Branches in this Conference to convey the following instructions to all the mechanics in their respective fields of labour, viz.:—let each mechanic write down his own christian and surname in full, also his age and address, with the name and age of his wife, and the names and ages of his children, beginning with the eldest that is dependent upon him. Then let him state his trade, and afterwards proceed to state the full extent of his capabilities; for instance, if a Silk Worker, let him state how many processes he can take the silk through previous to its being ready for the Printer; or if a Printer, say so; in fact, let him state how useful he can make himself in a country where manufactures are yet in their infancy. Then let him state, definitely, how much money, in pounds, shillings, and pence, he can raise towards his own emigration by the 1st day of January, 1852. Let these statements be given to the Presidents of Branches by the 25th day of May, next. The Presidents of Branches are then requested to see that they embrace the information wanted, and to state in writing, on the back of each sheet, the exact standing of the within-named person, with the office (if any) he holds. As soon as these lists come into my possession, I will cause them to be copied and properly arranged, and sent to President Richards, at Liverpool, so that he may be correctly informed of the numerical strength and talent of the mechanics in the London Conference. If, in any of the Branches, there be found mechanics who have sufficient to emigrate themselves to the Valley, let their Presidents try their obedience by counselling them to go to Zion as speedily as their circumstances will permit.

In my travels among the Branches, I have, in some instances, found the most inexplicable confusion in the manner of distributing the tracts; for instance, some of the travelling Elders, instead of numbering the tract covers of each series from 1 to 6, as the tracts themselves are numbered, they have numbered them from 1 to 120; the consequence has been—CONFUSION in their distribution. Some of the Branches have even done worse than this, for they have begun numbering, and never stopped until their tracts run out, consequently some of their tracts are figured as high as 240. I have a great desire to see uniformity in the management of the Tract Societies in the various Branches. That

this may be the case, I will not only call the attention of the brethren to the Conference Report, pages 14 and 15, but I will add a few words so as to make the matter still plainer.

There are two Series of tracts. The first Series is composed of "Divine Authority," the four Parts of the "Kingdom of God," and "Remarkable Visions." "Divine Authority" is No. 1; the first Part of the "Kingdom of God" is No. 2; Part 2nd "Ditto" is No. 3; Part 3rd "Ditto" is No. 4; Part 4th "Ditto" is No. 5; and "Remarkable Visions" is No. 6. A Series signifies a succession of numbers; therefore, *always* let No. 2 follow No. 1, No. 3 follow No. 2, &c. &c., and never, in any instance, give Nos. 2, 3, 4, 5, or 6 before you have given No. 1. This *First Series* must not, in any case, be mixed with the Second Series in such a manner that any number of the Second Series shall follow a preceeding number of the First Series, but the two Series must be kept separate. It is designed to give the reader six tracts to read, which will act as six testimonies to him of the truth of the Gospel, and six warnings of the approaching judgments of God. If he will pay no attention to the still small voice of those powerful advocates for Truth, we cannot help it. We must leave the matter in the hands of the Lord, who, I doubt not, will take measures, in his own time, to give the seventh and all following warnings. It will be wisdom for the Branches to keep a few extra Tracts of Nos. 1 and 2 of each Series on hand, to replace those that get destroyed or too much soiled for circulation. And as towns are frequently like individuals, (*i. e.*) not equally ready for the reception of the Truth, it will frequently be found to be the case that where the inhabitants of one street will take nearly all the tracts offered them throughout the whole Series, the inhabitants of another street will, almost altogether, refuse to take any after the first or second numbers. In such cases it will be well to furnish the distributors with several more of Nos. 1 and 2 than of the following numbers, being very careful not to have so many of the first numbers, that there will be any danger of having an insufficiency of the following numbers to supply the demand. The three months' credit given to the Branches for the Tracts in present circulation has expired, and it is hoped that the Presidents will not be negligent in their duty with respect to the speedy payment of the money due for Tracts. If any more Tracts are wanted by any of the Branches for circulation, they can have them on a credit of three months, as before. I doubt not but that the brethren have found that the number of Tracts already in circulation is far too small to accomplish their purpose of warning all who may reside in the several districts allotted to them. With the quantity of Tracts now in circulation, it will take five years to give the vast multitudes of people who live in the territory assigned to us to labour in, a privilege of accepting or refusing the Truths they contain. I hope none of the Branches will, in the least, slacken their exertions in this great work, for great results will surely spring from so extensive a spread of the printed word. The Sisters, especially, are worthy of all praise for the exertions they are making to carry those silent messengers from house to house. Let no man or woman be ashamed of taking part in the good work. Let none be ashamed of the message they bear to the people. Neither let any one leave a Tract at any person's house without first informing them that it is a Tract issued by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: if they will, with this knowledge take them in, there is a prospect that they will read them, or, at least, take good care of them.

Conference Fund.—It is hoped that the Branches will be forth-coming with their respective donations towards this fund. The sum voted has already been spent for the purposes specified in the Conference Report, pages 17 and 18. Let each President bring in his proportion of that fund for the five months ending 1st of June when they come to Conference. (*i. e.*) Let each send in their proper proportion for the three months ending 1st of April, immediately, and let them bring in their proportion for the two months ending 1st of June when they come to Conference. The reports from the travelling Elders are very encouraging indeed. They find the Tracts of very great assistance to them in their respective missions. I have heard some of the Presidents, when they were calling for the donations of the Saints towards the Conference Fund, remark that it was for the *support* of the travelling Elders. This is a very great error, for these Brethren do not depend upon the Conference Fund for any part of their support, but, in the nobility of their souls, they go forth *without purse or scrip*, depending on God and the people in whose midst they travel for food, raiment, and shelter. The Conference Fund is more especially designed to furnish them with Tracts for gratuitous distribution (by loan); indeed, a fund of thirty pounds per quarter would go but a little way towards the support of near *thirty* Elders. Lest some of the Presidents should be at a loss to know the amount of their proportion of the Conference Fund for the five months, I will state that the sum voted to be raised every three months for Conference purposes was at the rate of one pound sterling for every *one hundred* members: the proportion for five months at the same rate would be £1. 13*s*. 8*d*. per one hundred members.

I will here take occasion to call the *particular* attention of the Presidents of Branches to the instructions given in the Conference Report, pages 17, 18, & 19, relative to the collection and management of the different funds, *especially* to that part that relates to the sub-agent's remittances. Let there be no slackness in these matters. There has several instances come under my notice of late, where it has been found that the Treasurers of the different funds have made use of the monies entrusted to their care, intending to replace them, but circumstances prevented them doing so, and, when called upon for the money, the matter was brought to light. Now, let it be understood from this time forth, by all concerned, that this Church *is not a loan office;* and let the Presidents see that all Treasurers are duly instructed to hold sacred all Church monies that may be entrusted to their care; and if, after this warning is given, any Treasurer shall be found transgressing, let him be strictly dealt with as a violator of a sacred obligation. I hope that the sub-agents will never forget that the office at Liverpool has to do a vast business with a small capital, and that prompt remittances are *absolutely* necessary to enable the First Presidency to keep the great wheel rolling.

The far greater proportion of the Presidents of Branches have nobly seconded all my efforts for the spread of the work, and have strictly carried into effect the counsel I have given them relative to the division of their respective Branches into Districts, for the better management of the labours of the Priesthood, and for the better distribution of the Tracts. This unanimous co-operation of my brethren has been a source of comfort to me, and has given me great hopes for the future prosperity of the work in this Conference. Brethren, continue to strictly carry out the measures adopted by common consent for the spread of the work; for, by continuing to observe this unity of action, we will be prospered and blessed in all our labours.

"STARS."—In my visits among the Branches I have found that many of the Sub-Agents have large numbers of STARS on hand: this ought not to be. The members should take all the STARS sent to each Branch. When the *cheap* issue was proposed, it was decided that those who were then taking one Star for 2½*d.*, should take three for 3*d.*, and that the remaining fourth should be taken by the young men and maidens, and the poor who were unable to take three. The Branches will be required to pay for all the Stars they get from the General Agent; and if they will let them accumulate on the hands of the Sub-Agents, it will be doing no more than justice for the Council of the Branch to pay the Sub-Agent for the Stars thus left on hand, and not keep the Church out of the money for them from month to month. If the Stars cannot be disposed of without, let all who are able be requested to take three STARS for 3*d.*, and if they are not willing to do this, do not compel them, but let them have one STAR for 2½d. No one need feel fearful of taking a dozen Stars (if they have the means to spare for a year or two), for, in that time, from the vast increase in the membership of the Church in these lands, they will be sought after with more avidity than fine gold at a large advance upon cost.

With Star-parcel for May 15th, each of the Sub-Agents will receive a balance-sheet, giving a statement of the amount due by each to the General Agent. The Presidents can refer to these when they examine the Sub-Agent's accounts previous to coming to Conference. The sale of books by the General Agent to the Branches has been large since the new year, amounting to nearly ONE HUNDRED POUNDS STERLING per month. Nearly *three hundred* "Books of Mormon, *three hundred* "Doctrines and Covenants," and *four hundred* "Hymn Books" have been purchased since the new year. This great demand for these books has principally arisen from the formation of book clubs in the various Branches, whereby the poor have been enabled to possess themselves with the books of the law as well as those who are more able. It will be wisdom for the Presidents to encourage the formation of new clubs as soon as those that are in present existence run out.

SABBATH SCHOOLS.—Many of the Branches are now establishing Sabbath Schools, for the purpose of teaching the young in the first rudiments of an English education, and in the first principles of the Gospel. This is a noble and praiseworthy undertaking, and one that should be encouraged by all good people. It is surely unwise for the Saints to neglect the proper culture of the minds of their children, and suffer them to run wild and unrestrained through the streets, whilst they themselves are at worship. It will be more pleasing to God to see the children of His Saints with shining faces and clean apparel wending their way to school to be instructed in the ways of the Lord, than to see them growing up like ill weeds. In many instances, the Saints have the entire control of the Halls and Chapels used by them. If circumstances will permit, why not, Brethren, establish Day Schools for the education of your young, by teachers of your own faith, and not be under the necessity of sending your children to schools where their young minds will be crammed with all manner of religious nonsense and canting hypocrisy? Where there is a will there is a way.

MONTHLY REPORTS.—The Presidents of Branches and travelling Elders are *especially* requested not to forget sending in their Monthly Reports the first week in each month. I arrange my appointments so as to spend the first week in each month in London for the purpose of receiving those

reports, and giving such answers as may be deemed necessary. If they are not sent in at the time specified, it renders this arrangement more or less abortive. In the month of March I had to write EIGHTEEN letters to as many Presidents of Branches, to stir up their pure minds by way of remembrance of their duties; and this month I had occasion to remind nearly as many of their neglect. Brethren, be so kind as not to give me any unnecessary labour to perform: my necessary labours are sufficiently arduous.

The following Halls and Chapels will be occupied Sabbath Afternoon and Evening, the 1st day of June, viz.:—

CITY OF LONDON LITERARY AND SCIENTIFIC INSTITUTION, Aldersgate Street, City.

EASTERN LECTURE HALL, Church Lane, Whitechapel.

TEMPERANCE HALL, Carlisle Street, Portman Market, Paddington.

LATTER-DAY SAINTS' MEETING ROOM, Crown Wharf, Canal Bridge, Old Kent Road.

QUEEN'S SQUARE CONCERT ROOMS, Theobald's Road.

MR. RACKHAM'S SCHOOL ROOM, Bowling Green Street, Kennington.

BEULAH CHAPEL, Pond Place, Chelsea.

LATTER-DAY SAINTS' CHAPEL, 16, Aldenham Street, Somers Town.

LATTER-DAY SAINTS' MEETING ROOM, 23, Ratcliffe Terrace, Goswell Street Road, Islington.

The Afternoon Services will commence at half-past two o'clock; and the Evening Services at half-past six o'clock.

Brethren, I leave these instructions with you, believing you will take pleasure in carrying them out. May the Giver of all Good bless you and crown your labours with great success is the daily prayer of your Brother and Fellow-Servant in the Covenant of Peace,

ELI B. KELSEY.

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